

## July 14, 1984 by A-Kubrick-Spent

**Category:** Stranger Things, 2016

**Genre:** Drama, Friendship

**Language:** English

**Status:** In-Progress

**Published:** 2016-12-16 00:12:33

**Updated:** 2016-12-16 00:12:33

**Packaged:** 2019-12-17 14:51:28

**Rating:** T

**Chapters:** 2

**Words:** 1,771

**Publisher:** [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

**Summary:** Eight people live out a single day- those who have survived the extraordinary bear witness to the amazing.

## 1. 5:37 AM

Mike Wheeler awoke on July 14th, 1984 in a cold sweat, chest heaving up and down as he gasped for breath. The twelve year old sat up in his bed, shaking.

*Eight months.*

It had been eight months since the strange girl, Eleven, had come into his life, and then gone away just as quickly. It hadn't been... Easy.

On him, on Will, on anyone. Hawkins Indiana slept uneasily after the incident left several people dead in an alternate dimension, and a young boy back from the dead after his very public funeral. It was the kind of scandal that could ruin someone, if Joyce Byers actually gave a damn- she was achingly ecstatic that her boy came back home, and no one was going to keep her down, now that she was proven right (even *if* she couldn't talk about it with anyone).

Mike looked around, finally seeing his alarm clock- 5:37 AM. It wasn't even a school day, so he didn't have a reason to be up this early. But he was up, now, and he didn't want to risk going back to sleep, not when his nightmares were forcing him awake.

He wasn't sure what the Upside Down actually looked like- no one who had been there would actually talk about it- but he had this... *Image* of the place in his mind, and it was cold and lonely and *wrong* in a dark and subtle way. It was a place that haunted his dreams when he slept, a place that held the girl he knew hostage.

He sighed, flipping his legs over the side of his bed, sliding out onto the cold floor before moving to rummage through his dresser for some clothes to wear that day.

School would be over in a couple of weeks, and Lucas and Dustin were as excited as ever over the coming months of freedom. Mike was less so, and Will was...

Will was *different*.

*It was a subtle thing; almost nothing, really, except for the way that Will would jump at long shadows, or how he refused to bike some areas after dark, no matter how quickly it went or how many of his friends went with him. It was how his eyes always roved around now, searching for monsters in the walls. It was in the way his lungs still wheezed and struggled for breath, even now.*

Will Byers had left the Upside Down, but the Upside Down never left him.

But that was okay, to Mike's mind. It was still Will, still his best friend of six years, and still the person that he had risked his life to save from a terrifying hellscape. He just wished that he had done a better job at saving him. Maybe, if he had, Will wouldn't still be struggling to sleep at night, or to breathe deeply when they ran around outside.

Maybe he could have saved El, too. It had taken a long time, but there was a large part of Mike Wheeler that believes that Eleven, the strange, wonderful, brave girl with superpowers, was dead and gone.

Of course, there was still a deep and bitterly hopeful part of him that fully expected her to be in his basement, snuggled up in the blanket fort they had made, or eating eggos, or doing some other inscrutable thing that made her so amazingly special and unique.

He didn't like talking about that with the others, though. Will had never met her, and Lucas and Dustin assumed that she was truly dead. And he knew, logically, that they were probably right. She had disappeared into that nether place, slaying the big bad monster just like some hero out of one of their D&D sessions. Except, of course, he didn't think that he would be up to kissing any of the Elf Wizards that the boys liked to play as.

The house was quiet as he picked his way downstairs, the sun shining sleepily through the kitchen window as he grabbed an apple to snack on. Later, he and the boys planned to go to Wills house, watching movies and playing board games and generally being the kind of nuisance only four preteen boys could ever hope to be; but that was many hours away, and Mike was nurturing that fickle sort of melancholy that only came with early morning introspection.

Stepping out onto the porch, he curled up with his back to the wall and his knees tucked into his chest, idly munching on his apple as he watched the sunrise.

The wind blew past, ruffling his hair, and he could have sworn (if it wasn't such a crazy idea, of course), that he heard it whisper to him.

*Pretty.*

## 2. 8:00 AM

Nancy Wheeler woke at eight in the morning, rising with her preset alarm clock. She liked getting up early on her days off- it made her feel productive, like she was in control of her life.

It helped, especially considering how little control she *actually* had, after having fought a vicious multi-dimensional beast alongside her sort of friend and her sort of boyfriend, and after the government had covered it up, and after Will Byers came back from the dead when no one else did.

Barb was dead.

It had taken a few weeks to set in, after all of the excitement and strangeness had (somewhat) worn away, but a few weeks after Will made it safely home she had broken down, weeping, knowing that her best friend had died and it was most likely her fault.

She had just wanted to go home.

Barbara Holland had died alone, screaming, in a place that shouldn't have existed, to a monster that had no business being in rural Indiana. It wasn't *fair*!

Nancy shook her head to rid herself of these unhelpful thoughts- they would get her nowhere, she knew, and she couldn't even talk about it with anyone, besides Joyce and Chief Hopper, both of whom adamantly refused to talk about their experiences in the Upside Down with her or anyone. She knew from months of experience how that particular conversation would go; Joyce would clam up with a sad look on her face before doing her best to bustle about the house and ignore her in the most polite way possible, and Hopper would simply scowl before telling her that it "Wasn't something worth talkin' about, Nance".

It was bullshit, but the kind of bullshit she had come to accept, like curfews or how nerdy her brother was or the way Steve was constantly overcompensating, now that his friends refused to give him the time of day.

She didn't feel like getting out of bed, but did anyway, pulling a simple sundress out of her closet before wandering into the shower, the warm water washing away whatever sleepiness clung to her worried mind.

She was seeing Jonathan today. As she dried her hair with her (New as of Christmas) blow dryer, she idly wondered what the boy had been up to in the two weeks since she had last seen him. Jon Byers was an easily solvable enigma that no one bothered even trying to solve- gentle but lonely, firm in his convictions and unerringly brave, he was almost tantalizingly fascinating to her, an old soul who was quite literally willing to go into Hell to retrieve his brother from a terrifyingly unknowable monster.

It's too bad, she mused, that he strongly disliked almost everyone in Hawkins except for her and his brothers friends. However, thinking back to all of the cruel pranks played on the quiet boy by the towns younger population, she couldn't really blame him for it. At least Steve was doing his best to mend those broken fences between them, even if only for the sake of having someone else to converse with.

The dress felt smooth and almost silky on her skin as she slipped into it, the straps on her shoulders allowing a gentle breeze to flow over her neck and back. She gave the mirror an easy twirl, stifling a giggle as the fabric made a pretty swirl about her legs as she finished her impromptu pirouette. Straightening, she finished applying what little make up she was putting on for the day, and then slipped out and then down the stairs.

Steve was going to pick her up early for breakfast, and then drop her off at Jonathan's for their picture day- she would help him as best she could as he took pictures of the surrounding area, and then watching as he developed them in the schools dark room. She honestly found it all very interesting, no matter how wrong of a foot they had gotten off on back in November.

She slipped outside quietly, not wanting to bother with a conversation with anyone this early when, lo and behold, her brother was sitting outside their door in a ratty shirt and shorts, staring at nothing in particular.

"Mike?" He didn't answer, and she warily poked him in the head, causing him to start abruptly, lips sputtering as he whirled around to face her.

"Y-You, the... Huh? Nancy? Oh, uh, hey. Um, hi. What's up?" He awkwardly folded his hands in his lap, face pinkening as he turned his eyes away from hers.

"I'm... I'm gonna be going out with Steve for breakfast. Are you... Are you alright? You're not usually up this early on a weekend."

"Yeah, I'm fine. I just... I'm..." He trailed off, worrying at his bottom lip.

She slipped down next to him, back to the door jamb as she bumped his shoulder with hers. "Nightmare, huh?"

"*What?* No, I... I don't... I didn't..."

She smiled wanly at the tree line as the sun soared overhead. "No worries, Mikey. I have them, too. We went through some weird stuff. It's... Natural, I guess."

He hugged his knees, eyes wide as he stared out. "I keep imagining that... *Place*. The Upside Down. That she's in there, scared and alone."

Her heart broke for him, just a little. "Oh, Mike," she sighed, and brought him into a quiet hug, holding him as he did his best not to sob into her.

He almost succeeded.

Ten minutes later, when Steve collected her from the bottom of her driveway, she had a large, conspicuous wet spot on her dress, just below her chest. Steve didn't comment on it.